IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph at page 3, line 24, to page 4, line 7, with the following rewritten paragraph:

However, the problems described below exist in the conventional technology. Namely, the number, position, and strength of the light sources are different, and therefore shadows and brightness unevenness easily occur in the photographed image. Moreover, because the shadows and brightness unevenness are inconstant, it is not possible to apply uniform correction as with the scanner section of a photocopier machine or the like. Accordingly, images photographed using a digital camera have the problem that high quality binarization is not possible.

Please replace the paragraph at page 4, lines 13-16, with the following rewritten paragraph.

Furthermore, for example, on a notice board, some characters or a group of characters are of small [[in]] size. If such a notice board is photographed then there is a need to perform partial high quality binarization.

Please replace the paragraph at page 25, line 21, to page 26, line 9, with the following rewritten paragraph.

In the first embodiment, an example was described when the image binarization apparatus of the present invention was used in a digital camera. Block division is performed to correspond to the image size and the optical system and samples of the luminance values are extracted from the blocks. Because of this and because a low luminance binarization threshold value is set in consideration of the surrounding blocks and binarization is performed based on this, even if [[the]] all the pixels inside a block are part of a large

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character, or if the brightness between blocks abruptly changes, it is possible to calculate an

appropriate mean luminance value and to perform high quality, rapid binarization of an image

at a low level of power consumption. This, in turn, enables the useable duration of the digital

camera battery to be lengthened.